

A MANUSCRIPT FOUND IN VITORIA



By Los Incontrolados

**Addressed to all Spanish
Internationalists and to the entire
Proletariat**

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PUBLISHER'S INTRODUCTION

Along with the political chaos that ensued in Spain after Franco's death in 1975, there was also a significant movement of revolt among the exploited. This wildcat movement expressed embryonic revolutionary tendencies, with a suspicion of all parties and unions and the development of organs for the self-organization of the movement in the form of mass assemblies. The development of neighborhood as well as factory assemblies indicates that the consciousness of this movement was beginning to move beyond the limits of a workerist perspective and beginning to recognize the whole terrain of everyday life as the terrain of struggle. This is not so surprising considering that the social ferment happening throughout much of Europe at the time was pointing (if often in a rather incoherent manner) in this direction.

The following texts come out of this movement. They include analysis of the socio-political situation of the time as well as a look at the movement itself. They present a good analysis of a movement worthy of examination by those of us interested in understanding how the practice of self-organization and autonomy function. The texts first appeared in English in the book, *Wildcat Spain Encounters Democracy, 1976-1978*. This version is a revision of that translation largely following the version found on www.notbored.org.

The authors of these texts have chosen to call themselves "Uncontrollables", the term used as an insult in the 1930's by republicans, Stalinists, socialists and CNTistas for those proletarian rebels who refused to subject their desire for revolution to the alleged necessity for compromise in the name of unity against the fascists. In using this name, I feel that the authors emphasize the fact that without this total refusal to compromise with both official and oppositional institutions, any movement of revolt will slowly dissipate.

There are areas in the analysis presented here that I find problematic. For example, the authors seem to follow the left communist line that the betrayal of the revolutionary movement of the 1930's in Spain by CNT and FAI leaders is indicative of some inherent problem in any anarchist perspective. This ignores

the fact that on a practical level, the actions of these leaders were as much a betrayal of the best of anarchist principles as of the revolution. At that time, as in our own, there were anarchists who did not betray their anti-political perspectives. There can be no doubt that it is not *anarchists* who will make the revolution. But for the same reason, neither will marxists or communists. A revolution capable of creating anarchic and communistic social relationships will be the self-organized activity of the exploited, the dispossessed and all those disgusted with the present way of life, with anarchists and other self-proclaimed revolutionaries as specific factors within this context.

Perhaps more problematic is the approach of the writers of these texts to the economy. Their approach is dialectical. I do not deny the usefulness of the dialectic as one tool among others for understanding the world around us. But in applying this to the attack on the economy, the authors claim that the “supersession” of the economy requires its *realization* as well as its suppression, a claim that later leads them to describe the revolutionary task as that of resolving all the problems that class society not able to solve. This implies that there is something humanly useful in the economy that is to be retained, something that simply hasn’t been able to fully realize itself within the economy. At this point, I don’t believe this is a viable perspective. The essence of economy is, and always has been, dispossession and exploitation. At this point its degradation of life on all levels has reached the point where the most reasonable revolutionary option is the destruction of the economy, not its dialectical supersession. This means, among other things, that simply expropriate the various means of production, social reproduction and existence that capitalism developed and managing them as such is not enough, rather they must be dismantled and new means for creating our lives developed.

But despite these differences, I feel these texts provide a useful analysis of a self-organized revolt worth examining.

I have also chosen to append a text from the “Autonomous Groups”, individuals who chose to carry on a practice of attack against the institutions of capital and the state without regard for legality during and after the period of the wildcat movement.

A Manuscript Found in Vitoria

By the Uncontrollables

***Addressed to all Spanish Internationalists and to
all of the Proletariat***

How Francoism Became Democratic

*When legality is sufficient to save society, then
legality, by all means; when legality is not enough,
then dictatorship.—Donoso Cortes, 4 January 1849.*

Comrades:

Modern history has reminded the Spanish bourgeoisie of the alternatives formulated over a century ago by Donoso Cortes [the Carlist sympathizer who tried to make Carlism more sophisticated by trying to orient it towards modern problems], only it has reversed them: when dictatorship is not enough to guarantee the bourgeoisie's control over society, then democracy; from the moment that dictatorship no longer serves the bourgeoisie, then democracy must be revived to forestall revolution.

The ever-deepening social crisis and the wildcat advance of a proletarian solution has displaced the real center of gravity away from those who would represent it. This is so much the case that, in the circles of power, everything is in disorder and each strata of the hierarchy has been left floating. In order to negotiate with the bureaucratic opposition, those in power have decided to contradict their own legality, which is a legacy of the era in which they could dispense with such appearances, but which they must now organize as quickly as possible. The Francoists, who for so long humiliated the proletariat by their triumph, are now forced to humiliate themselves so that the proletariat doesn't triumph. The bureaucratic opponents of Francoism, in order to create confidence in the new democracy, have also had to pursue their own legality, show their faces, ally themselves

with the workers, humble themselves before the workers in order to be accepted (or at least not rejected outright). In the last year, during the course of the democratic stabilization of Spanish capitalism, the party of order (be it Francoist or oppositional) has seemed as incoherent as that order itself, founded, as it is, on a comic mixture of unreal laws and unlawful realities. But this incoherence has not stopped them—some within and others outside of the working class—from being profoundly united in practice, that is, united in a repressive division of labor against the growing autonomous movement.

If we consider the recent past honestly, we can quickly understand the immediate future that faces us. Given the wave of strikes that broke out during the winter of 1976, the various factions of the disintegrating regime and the united opposition were compelled to join forces so as to save the capitalist order, whose future was being disputed. The counter-revolutionary past was collapsing where it had sealed its unity on the corpses of the revolutionaries of 1936, and this was precisely where its putrefying evolution best demonstrated the truth of its being. The real unity of these various factions was split into its basic elements; each one got a new face lift and their apparent divisions were dissolved in their unity against the enemy. When Francoism became democratic, everything that was paraded in front of the proletariat—unionism, anarchism, Stalinism, Francoism—had to be opposed *en bloc*. When democratic Francoism tried to publicize the various brands of government policy from which the citizen was compelled to choose, it became clear that the quite evident unreality of this senile-from-birth political democracy consisted in the fact that the leaders' and aspiring leaders' margin for social maneuvering was so small that enormous difficulties would have rained down on them if they had presented these shadows as plausible alternatives in any pseudo-election. Thus, the Francoists and the members of the opposition—both of whom wanted to be taken for great historic innovators—appeared, without being able to disguise themselves in any way, as a sordid collection of traders, thieves and shady dealers, one and all maneuvering feverishly in an atmosphere of demagoguery and wretchedness.

What ten years ago would have been seen as a show of force—as a demonstration of its capability to destroy its terrorist past and to rule without a state of emergency—by a section of the Spanish bourgeoisie, today merely demonstrates the weakness and fears of this bourgeoisie at a time when it should be preparing its repressive future. United in their counter-revolutionary truth are “The great embrace of the great Spanish family,” as Franco used to say, and “national reconciliation,” as Carillo, the General Secretary of the Spanish Community Party, said. Such embraces usually have pimps behind them. Tierno Galvan, leader of the Popular Socialist Party, which has fused with one of the so-called socialist workers’ parties, illustrates the meaning of this cordial embrace: “The government has presented an intelligent program. A political agreement with the opposition could diminish the social and economic protests that run the risk of being transformed into a revolt against the institutional form of the State.” Galvan ends with a call for “a united front of all democratic parties and the regime in order to save it.” (Declaration of 12 August 1976.)

This will not be the first time, or the last, that the dominant power seeks its salvation through the organization of elections that give it the breathing space to come out of “one of the greatest social and political crises of the 20th Century.” If it is true that “crises are not resolved by spectacular leaps forward,” then this great leap forward in the spectacle could not be assured by simply holding elections, unless there was a profound falsification of social relations. Aside from the underdevelopment of the techniques of lying in the fields of information and culture—an underdevelopment that is shortly to be remedied (witness the large number of jobs created in these sectors) -- the dominant power, given its poor representation of the working class, also lacks attachment to the very roots of social falsification. The attempt to create unions failed, not from a lack of interest on the part of the government or the bosses, but because of the negative response of the workers themselves. At the beginning of this year [1977], the sum total of workers affiliated with the CC.OO [the union organized by the Spanish Communist Party], the UGT [the trade union organized by the Socialist Workers’ Party], the CNT [the anarcho-sindicalist

union], the USO [a group of Catholic and independent unionists], and the STV [the Catholic and nationalist Basque Workers' Union] -- all of which were in tatters as a result of the proletarian offensive—was less than 200,000, a number from which the students and cadres must be subtracted. It is laughable that the ruined CNS [the vertical union organized by the Francoist regime] was abandoned because it was no longer useful, and because what *was* of use—the opposition unions—was of no consequence, because these unions had no support among the workers.

Thus, comrades, a form of counter-revolution is today dying of old age and is trying to rejuvenate itself by a late democratic renovation. It is as if, as old Hegel used to say, in the gray twilight of this reign of shadows the motley politician can do nothing more than paint gray on gray.

Comrades:

When the situation after the death of Franco on 20 December 1975 cried out to the capitalists, “Make your play!” the workers answered with strikes that said “Not any more!” By enthroning Juan Carlos, the neo-Francoists believed that they—at their bidding and under the conditions laid down by them alone—could accord a place in the democracy to bureaucrats of the opposition. However, and from the beginning, the neo-Francoists had to accept the help that the opposition had no choice but to provide. This assistance was provided effectively; it was indeed the determinant cause of the liquidation of the most important strike movement since the Spanish Civil War.

Since the establishment on 15 December 1976 of the First Government of the Monarchy, around 100,000 workers—principally in Madrid, Catalonia and the Basque Country—have been on strike. The movement spread and at the same time became more radical. With its practice of mass assemblies and the formation of flying pickets, the movement surpassed all organizations and endangered the legal system of the bureaucrats. By January 1977, strikes were taking place all over Spain. But it was in Madrid that the autonomous movement of the workers fought its first great battle, one that involved 320,000 workers, principally in the building and metal-working

industries. The Minister for Union Affairs called for a cease-fire to which the USO, the CC.OO and the UGT agreed, saying that “It’s neither a question of retarding nor of radicalizing the strikes, but of finding a negotiable solution.” The principal liquidators of the strikes were to be the Stalinists, who, while unable to control them, could at least block them. The Stalinists were the first to accept the promises of the bosses; the bosses were the first to renege on them; and the Stalinists were the first to accept what the bosses had done. Ariza himself, dismissed from the Perkins diesel-engine factory in Madrid, called on his fellow workers to “continue working normally,” which illustrates in a caricature the impotence of the CC.OO, and the consciousness of such impotency in the utilization of the strike as a support for Stalinist politics. In using false information, electoral fraud, under-handed agreements, non-representative delegates and everything else that they had learned from their long history of manipulation and lying, the Stalinists managed to smash the most important strike—the one at Standard Electric, a multinational telephone corporation based in Madrid—and thereby broke and demoralized the strike front. First came the big engineering firms, then the smaller ones, then all of the other firms affected by the wave of strikes. The government militarized the mail, Renfe [the national railway] and the metro. Dismissals, sanctions, arrests and threats did the rest.

Following the principle “An ordered retreat so as to regroup at a later date”—sustained by every trick in the book—the strikes collapsed one-by-one in El Bajo Llobregat, Malaga, Valladolid, Barcelona, Tarragona, Elda, Allicante. The strikes that continued—Laforsa in Bajo Llobregat, the three Michelin factories, Roca in Gava, Vers Hutchinson and Terpel in Madrid—remained isolated and doomed to collapse from exhaustion. And in Vitoria—where the strikers’ assembly movement had come to the point beyond which only revolution lies, and where all recuperation had been disarmed and only bullets were able to stop it—the guns of the police ejaculated democracy’s last word on the subject, while the moralizing lamentations of the opposition sang harmony. For a day, all the defenders of the bourgeois order and their tear-soaked handkerchiefs were saved.

The battle that started in Madrid and ended in Vitoria was the first collision of the proletariat with an opposition henceforth under the sway of Francoism. The parceling out of repressive tasks was settled and the police completed what the lies and maneuvers of the bureaucrats could not. Marcelino Camacho [the Communist leader of the CC.OO], speaking about “strike mania,” opportunely recalls Jesus Hernandez, a Communist member of the Largo Caballero government who spoke about the “mania for seizing and collectivizing” during the Spanish Civil War. In Madrid and in the rest of Spain, the return to work was a very costly victory for the battered opposition; it paid dearly to keep its union dike standing. As a result, the Stalinists had to abandon their project of taking over the CNS vertical union “with all the elevators in working order,” because it was really “out of order,” and a useless vehicle for all concerned. Having to resort to the base in order to recuperate the assemblies, the Stalinists had to renounce the assumption from above of a monopoly upon workers’ representation. Forced to go along with the UGT and the USO, whose capacity to liquidate was inferior, the Stalinists joined in the negotiations with the government and the bosses. Although the Stalinists recuperated the parallel union composed of committees formed in each company, as well as the negotiating committees set up from above and outside of the assemblies, it didn’t help them. But this parallel union structure, obliged to go through the assemblies, could not last for long after the crushing of the latter. And when the assemblies were on the rise, the lies of parallel unionism had to triumph completely if this union structure did not want to lose in one assembly everything it had achieved in the rest. The mass assemblies of strikers, no matter how imperfect their control over the struggle was, contain the possibility of total autonomy in the making and carrying out of decisions, as well as the necessity of suppressing all external representation. In conclusion, the sad role played by the politico-union opposition in the current historical period was that of supporting the government, no matter what, even to its own detriment, and without ever being able to guarantee social peace.

Comrades:

Going into action is to war what payment is to commerce. The battle of Vitoria on 3 March 1976 was the moment of truth in which all the protagonists in the social war had to appear as they really were. Without leaders, the workers threw themselves so courageously into the struggle that the bosses and bureaucrats alike were dumb-founded by this unmentionable autonomy. Some of the bosses and bureaucrats hoped—without real conviction—that the movement would recognize and accept the mediation of the vertical unions, whose “representatives” had been forced by the workers to resign. Without expecting that the intervention of their union structure would be of much use to them, the bosses and bureaucrats now limited themselves to trying to prevent the workers’ stronghold (the Michelin tire factory in Vitoria) from joining the strike. In two months of autonomously organized struggle—daily factory assemblies and bi-weekly joint assemblies that could not make decisions that had not been previously approved in the daily assemblies—the workers had created the sufficient practical conditions for their conscious offensive. By adopting the slogans “All power to the assemblies of the working class” and “Everything within the assembly, nothing outside it” as fundamental principles that were beyond any possible discussion, the workers took the initiative that could lead to the revolution that must leave nothing exterior to it. But the workers saw the assemblies solely as a better means of defense, and did not recognize the extent of their challenge to existing society, and so misunderstood their self-organization.

Nevertheless, what the workers ignored, the State and, to an even greater degree, the union bureaucracy struggling to form itself already knew. Within a movement that carries forward all the workers in a factory and that unmasks those who speak in their name and who stifle their struggle, it is enough that the workers impose direct control in the general assembly. The workers can then appropriate as a new need the need for communication; and so what in the beginning appeared as a means changes into an end in itself, namely, direct communication that overcomes the purely defensive struggle against representations and that abolishes the conditions of separation that has made representation necessary. Consequently,

all responsible unionists could say that they agreed with the ends pursued by the workers, but not with the means they employed. In fact, the requirements of the struggle irresistibly led the workers to cease making demands and to *take* what they needed. This process had to be interrupted at its most advanced point: Vitoria had become too exemplary in regards to what the proletariat could achieve without parties and unions, and this at the precise moment in which the bosses' promises to give into the workers' demands were seen as the answer to all of their needs. On 3 March, the strike become generalized throughout the entire city, and the demonstrations in the capital saw the erection of the first barricades, as well as the first violent confrontation in which the police used their guns. The peaceful illusions of the originators of the strike disappeared. The police fell back, waiting for reinforcements. Provisional masters of the streets, the workers contented themselves with reinforcing the network of barricades they had constructed and—worse still! -- were so naive as to meet, as if nothing had happened, at the pre-arranged assembly point at the Church of Saint Francis. Letting the police know about the meeting in advance was like doing their job for them. Anyone who doesn't like to ideologically sanctify what was still the *weakness* of the autonomous movement must say that it was the lack of consciousness among the workers, above all else, that delivered them into the waiting hands of their enemies and in the worst possible conditions. The workers assembled in the church to listen, yet again, to the legalistic placebos of the choir-masters, who insisted that the police would not enter the church "because the authorities would not permit it." The workers missed their chance to retreat voluntarily, despite a valiant attempted diversion by those outside. The police were therefore able to regain the initiative, which the workers gave up. Choosing to reach a solution through a show of force, the State—wagering that the workers would not be able to organize either their response or their own weapons—took the risks necessary to put an end to the first spontaneous form of the proletarian offensive and to violently impose the consciousness of what was at stake in the struggle. Francoism took such a risk—the first time in its life that it risked being listened to and followed, if not actually preceded, as was the case with various

local strikes, such as the one in Pamplona—because it had made its calculations hand-in-hand with the opposition, that is to say, with the union-political bureaucracy that let the repression begin and end without calling for a national strike. The desperate violence *after* the shooting in Vitoria demonstrated that the workers' determination to fight, though unorganized and unaided, had not been annihilated. But the rage behind these destructive actions only expressed very clearly the rage at not having acted violently in a more effective way previously. The only possible way of surpassing the struggle was to turn the riot into an insurrection, which meant calling for revolution throughout Spain. (The State was perfectly aware of this fact and hurriedly cut off all telephone communications with the outside.) But the proletariat had not progressed as far as that. Not having envisioned the need for self-defense, the workers' communication amongst themselves was completely disorganized by the repression. Guns had to speak before the assemblies would quiet down. Silence reigned in Vitoria. The workers' committee from the Forjas Alavesas factory wrote in its analysis of the struggle that, "There is no better way of resolving the conflict than by dismantling one of its parts. We have returned to work without achieving everything we wanted to achieve. First, we were bound to do so because of machine-gun fire. And, second, if we consider the *assembly* as our most fundamental weapon, we have been disarmed." ("Thoughts on the Forjas Alavesas Strike.") Each time the State takes the initiative with a frontal attack, it obliges the workers to transform their own particular method of waging war into that of the State's. And in order to dominate this method before being dominated by it (as during the Civil War), that is to say, in order to use it without reproducing it—something that the working class has to do—many more Vitorias are necessary.

Comrades:

The first Government of the Monarchy died in Vitoria. Its birth was not due to the general agreement amongst the pretenders to Franco's reign, but to the negotiations of the then-President Arias Navarra with the most astute first-comers and opportunistic imposters. Those Francoists who were not included

in the government and who were not prepared to accept it, formed their own separate parties, thereby entrenching themselves in the division of power and its institutions, following the parceling out that took place after Franco's death. If they could not direct the government from the separated party positions, then the Francoists could at least contain it. To transform the Francoist institutions smoothly—to successfully modernize the State and re-inflate the economy—the government had to reorganize Francoism as *the* government party by replacing its worn-out parts and by gaining the collaboration of the opposition, ceding some responsibility to it without making it a part of the apparatus. It had to win new friends from the outside as well as prevent old enemies from retaliating from within.

Fraga Iribarne, the leader of the extreme right-wing group Popular Alliance and former Minister for Information and Tourism under Franco—seemingly the strongest man at the time—did what political dwarfs do on great occasions such as this one: he stumbled and fell. By means of ministerial appointments, he fabricated the pretense of a personal party that intended to impose his conditions on everyone else by way of separate negotiations. But he lacked the strength to gain the time necessary to do so, as well as the astuteness to utilize what time he had. The strike movement manifested all of its subversive reality while the government vacillated from one day to the next. At the end of March 1976, the official organ of officious democracy, *Cambio 16*, wrote: “After Vitoria, everything is possible”—earnestly hoping for a new government that could come to an agreement with the opposition in order to “obtain a truce in the streets and the factories.” Fraga, who detained Camacho and others, shamelessly sought excuses instead of remedies, and reproached the opposition for not having managed to hold reality at bay, as if the latter hadn't tried to do so in order not to lose the possibility of controlling it. Trying to buy the opposition on credit—a tactic that offered no room for maneuver—Fraga knew that the opposition would work for free when everything hung in the balance due to the strike movement. And so Fraga remained alone in his headquarters, caught between the Francoists who were united against him to preserve

their State, and the opposition, which had joined together in the *democratic coordination* that was prepared to negotiate the salvation of the State with anyone who cared to listen and that was prepared to occupy the “power vacuum” that would be left by the imminent fall of the government. The demobilization of the Vitoria solidarity movement, as well as the events of the first of May, were the last unpaid jobs done by the opposition, which allowed the Arias government to survive for a few more weeks. Similarly, these actions were the final stabs in the back to the strike movement, which lost its last opportunity to re-unite and return to the attack. The initial failure of the government of Fraga and Arias marked the end of the authoritarian illusions of Francoism. In the future, it would have to take democracy seriously. As the new president of the government, former UDC leader Adolpho Suarez later declared: “On the one hand, there is a very active, very intelligent opposition, which does not have experience in governing; on the other hand, there are government officials who do not have the least notion of what the function of the parties is all about. It’s a question of getting them to work together—everything depends on that” (*Cambio 16*, 6-12, September 1976).

Because of the uncontrolled violence of the workers, democracy lost its first battle, even before it came into existence. In the future, it would have to reform its rear-guard forces, sacrificing all of the dangerous and vulnerable positions that the previous system of defense had bequeathed to it. Every battle lost is a weakening and disintegrating factor. The most urgent need was to collect democracy’s forces together in order to gather new-found strength and confidence. This could only come from amongst the forces least affected by the combat, that is, from among the democratic organizations of the opposition that Spanish capital was learning to appreciate in some measure as its *strategic reserve*. But, as Clausewitz has demonstrated, “Just as reserve tactics are recommendable, the idea of using as a strategic reserve forces that are already prepared is contrary to common sense. The reason for this is that battles decide the outlook of the war; so the employment of reserve tactics precedes any decision, while the employment of reserve strategies follows them.” And, in fact, this last card that

capitalism wanted to keep up its sleeve had to be played at the opening of the game. Between the workers and the State (i.e., the police and the military forces of law and order), only a fragile buffer of politico-union bureaucracies existed to take the shock of the workers' offensive. And so, the politico-union bureaucracy—all of its outposts exposed on open ground to the repressive forces of the State—constituted the reserve tactics whose employment would decide the outcome of the battle. The police assassinations throughout the “bloody week” were carried out at the very time when the bureaucracy, extremely skilled after two solid months of maneuvering, was itself going to be blasted. To get the workers to agree to the moderate positions of the opposition, it was necessary to scare them. On 13 March 1976, *Triunfo*, the weekly magazine of unadulterated Stalinism, wrote: “Undoubtedly the working class also picks up some lessons from these events. The first lesson is that recourse to violence, in addition to being ethically wrong, is politically wrong because it plays into the hands of reaction. All those who take upon themselves the possibility of influencing a working class that is deprived of a party and its unions—a working class whose complaints are continually disregarded—must do so in the sense of recommending calm and quiet. If strikes, demonstrations or meetings turn into riots, the working class has everything to lose.” One of the bureaucrats' means to end the strikes used most during the following week was intimidation. The bosses profited the most from the victory over the strikes by the pseudo-clandestine unions. The bosses stood firm concerning the dismissals and the sanctions; then they introduced specific legislation against strike pickets; and then they secured the suspension of Article 35 of the Labor Relations Act, which had prevented the bosses from sacking workers without paying them redundancy money. The unions allowed these things to take place uncontested. Finally, the bosses abandoned the CNS and doted on those unionists who were disposed to an early dialogue with the workers' unions (whose capacities for falsifying, dividing and ruling had to reach their height so as to confront the next inevitable movement of the masses). The bosses needed leaders “who are as capable of calling a stoppage as of ordering a return to work” (in the words of Ribera Rovira, President of the

Barcelona Chamber of Commerce). There were special recommendations: if the Catalan boss Duran Farrell was a worker, as he himself claimed, “he would be in the *Comisiones Obreras*.” For their part, the unions wouldn’t have any difficulty in convincing the capitalists of their good intentions, although they would have a much harder job passing off their tricks on the working class. “For 25,000 pesetas inscription fees, heads of personnel and managers of more than 100 companies were able to hear and see in the flesh union leaders from the ‘illegal’ CC.OO, the USO and the UGT. They all insisted on a dialogue: ‘The workers do not go on strike for pleasure’; ‘the workers do not want companies to founder’; ‘class struggle does not exclude dialogue, rather it presupposes it.’ None of them wanted to frighten the managers off, one of whom exclaimed, ‘What a shame that the workers in the factories do not think in the same way as those in this room’” (*Cambio* 16, 24-30, May 1976). But wanting to be of help is not enough! To be of use, it is necessary to close ranks and avoid surprises like Vitoria and the appearance on the scene of “unknown” revolutionary formations that swamp the union bureaucracies. In the big cities, coordinating bodies such as the COS [which federated the CC.OO, the UGT, and the USO] were formed and were ready to occupy the gap that the old CNS never filled. The Stalinists gave up trying to transform the CNS into an inter-syndical such as the Communist Party had succeeded into doing in Portugal. The groupuscules of every shade entered *en masse* into the several central unions.

The government and the opposition exchanged bows of appreciation and then went off together to prepare the counter-attack. The second neo-Francoist government came to power on a program of continuing this same democratic progression on a social terrain dangerously exposed to the view of the ascendant assembly movement—although this government only occupied the terrain partially, and now sought new means and allies. “The workers have taken the factory as the field of operations,” said J. Garrigues Walker, a major capitalist in Catalunya and a right-wing Catholic. People like Walker shall have to *divert* the workers from their exclusive concentration on this terrain of practical unification.

Comrades:

We can say that in Spain all of the current dilemmas of the propertied classes of the world are found *concentrated in time*. These classes, which are unsure of how to administer their failure (cloaked as “the energy crisis” or “the economic crisis”) or of how best to make this failure profitable again by strengthening the State, are neither able to save the economy nor able to be saved by it. Faced with the crisis of the economy, the propertied classes must, here in Spain as everywhere else, persuade the workers—through the intermediaries of unions and parties—that the economy is a *natural* alienation that requires skilled administration, instead of an *historical* alienation that must be overcome as soon as possible. But as the development of the crisis of the economy is accelerated at this moment in Spain by a particular economic crisis, whose consequences are worsened by the absence of union control, the difficulties in getting the masses to respond to this dramatized austerity are considerably greater. Even more pronounced is the limited time in which the propertied classes have to embark on “a new model of development,” which is the basis of agreement between all the moderates. Before all else, the Spanish economy requires a new “stabilization plan.” Loans from international capital will be necessary, but even more urgent is the search for conditions of profitability among the proletariat. The longer each strike is prolonged, the more each and every strike becomes the business of the State, which is obliged to intervene and thereby raises the issue of self-defense among the strikers. The opposition proposes political democracy as the remedy, which means allowing this opposition to become part of the government, not only with respect to the economy but also in terms of a social contract. Consequently, the opposition has ceased attacking the economy, provided that it was given the opportunity to defend it. But such sophisms did not deceive the government itself, which knew—as it watched the opposition do all it could do against the mobilization and radicalization of the workers—that, if the opposition was unable to do more, it was because it could not. Therefore, the second Government of the Monarchy allowed the

opposition to deceive itself with the promise of being tossed a few electoral crumbs, while the government devoted itself to the controlled adaptation of the State's institutions. And it is not the result of some supposed betrayal by the opposition that neo-Francoism has stabilized itself. First, because the opposition was in no position to prevent this stabilization, and, second, because the opposition did not want anything more than what it got. However, it would have liked to have created the appearance of having won concessions after a great struggle; but it had to give up this hope. The opposition spoke about a republic; then of a more democratic king; then of a representative government of national unity; then of some ministry; and, finally, it settled for being allowed a place on the electoral ballot. One cannot fail to see that, because of the action taken by the Suarez government and the passivity of the opposition, the regime was allowed to effect an *orderly* retreat with a minimum of losses. By managing to keep control of the political situation, the regime retained the possibility of being able to return to take over the entire social terrain once again. Cleverly combining tolerance in relation to the details, and repression where it was essential, the government maintained in contact with the proletariat that was pressuring it, and thus prevented the proletarian movement from accelerating and returning to a lawless turmoil that would have forced the government to make truly important sacrifices due to the resulting internal disintegration. One should contrast the unexpected firmness of the Suarez/Mellado government [General Guittierrez Mellado being Suarez's Vice-President and Minister of Defense] with the confused cowardice of the opposition, whose prudence was the best part of its courage and whose obscure bargaining the clearest instance of its prudence. It was sufficient for the politically calculating government to simply negotiate separately with each of the opposition's principal opponents for it to deflate the bluff of "democratic coordination." Each opponent feared losing or at least missing some minor advantage if it continued to associate with the others, and the rivalry that resulted from this disparity inevitably divided each from the others. But, even without this situation, the democratic coordination had ceased *in fact* to exist from the moment when the government acknowledged the favors of the

Stalinists, who were endorsed with the opening of the dialogue with Suarez. The exclusion of all the superfluous parties—the Maoists, the small incidental groups such as those of Treviziano and the Carlists—cost nothing, but, nevertheless, was a relief. The remodeled opposition therefore presented itself in a more respectable fashion in the form of a new “negotiating committee” that, along with the government, prepared the liquidation of the October strikes. The opposition’s final dreams of glory were dissipated, and it now recalled with nostalgia “how beautiful it all was to a democrat under Franco.”

Comrades:

The revolutionary proletariat exists, and the long series of exemplary strikes in the autumn of 1976 in the Basque Country, Barcelona, Sabadell, Tenerife, Valencia, Madrid, Leon, Gava et al proves it. The proletariat, neither resting nor allowing anyone else to rest, caused a change in tactics by the government, which had to be less concerned about itself and more about the opposition than it would have been otherwise. Although its own position was not strengthened, the government had to make sure that the opposition was not weakened, which would have left the social terrain open to revolution. We may ask ourselves if the government, faced with violence in the streets and factories, was pessimistic about its future, or if it had the impression of a *widespread pre-insurrectionary chaos*, or if it simply smelled something smoldering. What is certain is that the government acted rapidly, organizing its own party, giving the go-ahead to the unions and the parties, and setting a date for general elections.

The provocations of the extreme right provided the alibi that justified making what previously was a tactical agreement into an official one. The final bloody events of February allowed the opposition to proclaim openly its support for the government and to demand secretly a promise not to be abandoned by it, given the waves of anti-union strikes that would not be long in coming.

Francoism had now become completely democratic and the opposition had become completely Francoist, with their “democracy” closing the door to revolution. It was up to the proletariat to wrench it open.

The Revolution Does Not Draw Its Poetry From The Past

We knew that the committees responsible to the CNT henceforth could do nothing other than put obstacles in the way of the proletarian advance. We are the friends of Durutti, and we are strong enough to depose those individuals who have betrayed the working class for reasons of incompetence and cowardice. At the time when we had no enemies in front of us, these individuals in the CNT handed over power to the companies, the police, the reactionary governor of Valencia and the Secretary of Defense, General Pozas. Betrayal is really something.—“Manifesto of the Friends of Durutti,” 8 May 1937.

Comrades:

The working class that once again took up the struggle was nothing like the working class that had impetuously hurled itself into the strikes of the previous year. The guns of the police and the maneuvers of the bureaucrats made it understand what the concessions that had been obtained really meant. The greatest achievement of the assembly movement is the movement itself. The freedom *taken* by the workers in starting to unite and organize themselves without any intermediaries is the one thing that could neither be granted by the regime nor demanded by its leaders, because today traditional Spanish society is besieged and falling apart. The assembly movement is the *lived* freedom of anti-hierarchical dialogue, the *realization* of authentic democracy. The movement is the place in which revolution feels most at home and its enemies feel like intruders who are not only denuded but also denounced by their own ideological jargon. Here, all practical problems take form and can be resolved. In the organization of the strike pickets, it was a question of autonomy arming itself. In dissolving the elected assembly committees into which the manipulators wanted to place their representatives, the movement refused to supply new weapons to its enemies. But the most threatening thing for the bureaucrats was not these initiatives, but the fact that the workers—once they

got together and took command of the movement—felt themselves to be naturally propelled to carry these initiatives out in practice, and, later on, to correct them and supersede them in the light of experimentation and further practice.

There was nothing that the bureaucrats wanted to undermine more—nothing that they persisted in combating and destroying with such bloodthirstiness—than direct communication. The “representative” bureaucrats could never hope to stabilize the situation while free discussion—discussion that made dialecticians of the workers—still existed.

Frequently in history, but especially at the beginning of new epochs, mass movements are judged by those who represent them, or at least by those who have pretended to represent them in the past. This is generally true for the image that a nascent revolution has of its own aims, language, references to the past, and the imaginary genealogy in which its wants to guarantee its truth. In prohibiting both access to the revolutionary past as well as its critical reappropriation, the Francoist counter-revolution has been the best ally of those bureaucrats who helped expropriate the memory of the past in their authorized myths of it. This is the reason why the falsehood of anti-fascism, which has been perpetrated mainly by the Stalinists, had been able to dominate the scene for such a long time. It is better to die on one’s feet than to live on one’s knees, and it is better still—if one is a Stalinist trying to survive in Prague or Moscow – to make capital out of martyrs and trading in corpses. With the decomposition of anti-fascist ideology, followed by an attitude of surprise, the enlightened technique of rewritten and false histories eventually had to redeem other, more suitable ruins from the shadows (ruins that undoubtedly would excite admiration). One was anarchism, disinterred as an anti-historical and tranquilizing explanation for the modern contestations of the State, and reduced to the eternal belief in the return of revolt. This revolutionary ideology—the local form of the general alienation of the old workers’ movement that in other places would have originated in Marxism—was the one that, for obvious reasons, was more suitable in Spain than anywhere else, because it had once been a massive reality here. But the revolution draws its poetry from the future, in which the

revolution has to learn to re-invent its justifications and impose them. Partisans of revolution have no need to defend anything of the illusory and boring paradise of petrified memories. Because they *are present* and have no need of any justification for their existence on the scene, partisans of revolution must choose to forget those obsessive references to past glory and must refresh historical memory. Those starting to make history again have no reason to learn history—for from whom could they learn it? They shall learn the truth of what happened in history only by struggling against that which opposes them. In doing so, they will know in a tangible form—one capable of verification—all that was previously true. The revolution can then serenely separate itself from the past.

It is not a question of revolutionary critique giving currency to a new version of the past, but of showing how the real movement extricates itself from the past. It is not simply a question of explaining what leads up to the current revolutionary situation, but of demonstrating what in the current situation explains the previous process and gives it its revolutionary direction. Such a critique has to regard as an enemy everyone that evaluates positively the “constructive work” of the revolutionary anarchists of 1936, who cannot be considered “constructors” other than to the extent that they were impotent and failed to destroy the criteria that allows their achievements to be appreciated on the terrain of economic rationality, that is, justifying self-management by counting the number of kilos of oranges and rice produced on the collectives. The “phantoms of 1937” return to besiege democracy 40 years later. But the nightmare of the leader should never become the dream of the revolutionary: if one dreams, it is because one is asleep. Today’s proletarians will have to be *much worse* than the insurrectionaries of May 1937 who really knew how to act without their masters knowing how to retaliate. Modern subversion cannot begin until it has liquidated *all* the superstitions of the past.

Comrades:

In the crisis-plagued Spanish economy, the only (albeit chaotically) expanding sector is that of the political-union

bureaucracy, which has seen the number of jobs increase considerably. Amidst this growing frenzy of basic-training courses provided to the new recruits—who are less representatives of the working class than they are traveling salesmen for their beloved union and democracy—it is the resuscitated CNT that necessitates comment, both because of its current misery and the greatness of the past that it tries to inherit. Without getting into the genetic arguments made by Diego Abas de Santillan, who has said that “In Spain there is a nearly racial tendency towards anarchism,” let us note that the importance of anarchism in the old Spanish workers’ movement has either been abusively attributed to anecdotes (e.g., Fanelli, the first emissary of the International in Spain, was a Bakuninist) or been interpreted tendentiously by sub-Marxist sociology (e.g., the importance of the agrarian proletariat and industrial workers of recent peasant origin). A more historical analysis cannot forget that the revolutionary movement of the proletariat is determined by its origins in the socio-economic framework of each country, that is to say, by what has been the formal mode of appearance of the bourgeoisie. This framework is both the organizational and programmatic legacy with which the proletariat begins to fight, as well as the terrain on which it fights and that conditions its struggle. Thus the importance of politics in the organized workers’ movement of each country is exactly proportional to the degree to which the national bourgeoisie has appropriated the State and achieved political domination. Now, no one should be surprised that the Spanish proletariat was not sidetracked by politics during the period in which the bourgeoisie came in through the back door as a result of its compromise with the landed aristocracy. The Marxist position, according to which the proletariat and the bourgeoisie were identified from the point of view of the revolutionary seizure of power, was not only a general strategic illusion in Spain, but a particular tactical error that totally failed to understand the meaning of the initial battles. This position was an incomprehension that was later aggravated by the sordid necessities of the anti-Bakunin polemics. But what was understood by some was simply ignored by others. If the scientific ideology based on the conception of a universally applicable and linear scheme achieved its bureaucratic truth in

the Stalinist “theory of stages,” then the ideology of liberty had, for its part, to reveal fully its hidden authoritarianism at the moment when all the questions that it had inhibited were formulated in practice by the revolution. Historical justice determined the question of organizational mediation—always the rotten apple in the anarchist barrel—to represent anarchism’s negative decomposition, a process of putrefaction that ended on 6 November 1936, when *Solidaridad Obrera* peremptorily affirmed that, “As of yesterday, the proletariat of the CNT is collaborating in the governing of Spain.” The revolutionary immediacy that anarchism had always guaranteed and promised encountered its unforeseen realization in this sudden metamorphosis of the proletariat into part of the government. But if history—what the anarchist masses attempted in spite of their leaders—has already criticized the worst side of anarchism, it is necessary today to criticize its *better side*. In the very same actions referred to above, the masses applied the anarchist program—as it was formulated by the final congress of the CNT in Zargossa (the best representation we can find of the separate coherence of ideology) -- and demonstrated the limitations and verified the insufficiencies of this program. The experiment in collectivization, which was an anti-economic program in the agricultural sector that intended to rid itself of money and a weak economy, could only proceed slowly and as “Libertarian communism in one village.” In the factories, collectivization was forestalled from taking control of the organization of production by the union bureaucracy, which discovered through the “war efforts” the best way to integrate collectivization into the State. Contemporary self-management finds in this innovative precursor—as in contemporary garden-variety Titoist self-management—no revolutionary future, not even a counter-revolutionary one. What are thought to be past utopias— anarchism, which confuses the practical movement with Kropotkinist ideology, is inevitably nostalgic for the golden age—are, on the contrary, the bearers of an authentic *negative* grandeur whose meaning one must know how to interpret. Anarchism wanted to *suppress* the economy, which cannot be suppressed without being *realized*. The illusion of suppressing the economy without realizing it is not supported these days by

any movement that combats existing conditions; it is an illusion propagated solely in the form of an antiseptic, pedagogic moralizing by an idiotic ecological reformism. The CNT, which has been resurrected *alongside* the current proletarian movement as the jack-of-all-trades for the lumpen-bourgeoisie in search of ideological certainties, is in the historical dustbin, along with the ecologists and their concerns with the problem of waste. Anarchism wanted to *suppress the economy* without realizing it; and Marxism wanted to *realize the economy* without suppressing it, that is, to realize the proletariat as the greatest productive (strictly *economic*) force. And, of course, neither of these two unilateral positions could crown their respective enterprises with any success, although each had to do the opposite of what it intended to do at the moment of truth. In the anarchist collectives, the monetary abstraction was formally combatted, but at the same time it was generalized everywhere as the concrete content of activity. Thus, life tended to be converted into a strictly “economic problem.” In Marxism—the totalitarian identification of bureaucratic power with the proletariat, that is, the terrorist dictatorship of an ideology that wanted to rationalize the economy—all economic problems were left up to the police, even to the demented point of scorning the prime necessities of economic rationality. Today, the modern revolution—through the struggles in which the parts of the project begin to be unified—shows us that the suppression and the realization of the economy are inseparable aspects of the same supersession of the economy.

Today, the assembly movement, by overcoming its first spontaneous forms, is faced with the task that had stopped previous revolutionary attempts; and that task is the need not merely to occupy but also to transform the social space in which separation presides “naturally” over hierarchy and non-communication. If the revolution takes up from where it left off, it is not because of some mystic fatality, but because the previous limitations that it had encountered now confront it as obstacles to the formulation and organization of this same conscious project. Previously it was the revolution’s incapacity; today it is the power of the enemy, one that has converted its territory—by a kind of scorched-earth policy—into something

nearly impossible to reappropriate. Bakunin's famous formula, "The desire for destruction is a creative passion," is no longer the expression of a subjective truth, but the accurate formulation of an objective need to establish on the ruins of passivity the *only operational base* from which the power of the assemblies can recognize itself and pass over to the offensive. This need to *construct the terrain of autonomy*, in which the circulation of commodities ceases and mankind begins to encounter itself, had begun to be satisfied on 3 March 1976 in Vitoria with vandalism and barricades, and was summarily expressed in the interruption of traffic on the motorway between Madrid and Irun, and in the main access routes within the city itself. In the social war, the proletariat doesn't simply have *information problems* concerning the enemy's positions, but also concerning its own positions. As everything in society exists to prevent these problems from being resolved, it is necessary to destroy everything that exists. The current movement has scorned politics but it has had to learn that, to overcome politics, it is not enough to simply ignore it. Although the proletariat imagined that it could ignore the State, it has had to learn the hard way that the State has not ignored it. Although there hardly remained any illusions concerning the "democratic" unionism that was planned for it, the proletariat shall have to take total control of autonomous relations if the walls of the factory are not to be the final ramparts of the old world. In the neighborhood assemblies, which spread everywhere, the tendency to reject exploitation in all of everyday life advanced steadily, and from there developed into a critique of wage labor. Since then, the assemblies have become a channel in which Christian Stalinists—who thrive on fishing in the murky waters of sordid survival and carry in their mouths the ridiculous phrase "Democratic Town Halls"—swim. And yet, the assemblies have also generalized the thirst for dialogue and the experience of self-defense. At the same time that the form of the mass assembly was adopted in all areas in which it corresponded to a real necessity, it was also recuperated as a caricature (without real content) in all other areas in which the assembly-form was necessary to be *perceived* as real: e.g., in student and "progressive" substitute milieus or in those milieus of the political-cultural spectacle. In both, the assembly-form

was either very boring or very stupid. These shady “bazaars,” in which cowardice and submission celebrated their respective redemptions (complete with liturgy and intercessors), were by no means the principle expression or even a weak echo of real and free communication. These recuperated projects of discussion—unlike those projects to which the workers’ assemblies gave rise—were content with a “freedom of speech” that accepted the fact that they could say anything but do nothing. These so-called assemblies wanted to discuss everything, but ended up discussing nothing. By contrast, if the workers’ assemblies only wanted to discuss what they were actually doing—and if, in the end, they did indeed manage to discuss everything—this was because it was necessary for the assemblies to do everything possible (including simply continuing the conversation) to stop the bureaucratic monopoly on expression from being re-established. To combat confusionist interference, the assembly movement need only draw its theory from its practice and *forbid all else as socially obnoxious noise*. The assembly movement’s first victories were forcing all of its enemies to accept its existence and to feign support for the movement’s terms. The movement’s enemies were exhausted by their unsuccessful efforts to recuperate it, that is to say, to *capitalize* on the gold of autonomy, which turned into carbon when the recuperators tried to mint it into their ideological money. In the usurious race to put up external representations, inflation ate into everything that was falsely autonomous. Ectoplasmic mini-bureaucracies—acquiring their existence at the cost of being inconsistent, then paying the price by disappearing—sprang up and died off during the course of each strike. Things went so far that even the Stalinists of the CC.OO threw a little “councilism” into their bureaucratic unionism and some “assemblyism” into their maneuverings. Throughout a busy year, the Stalinists had composed a veritable encyclopedia of manipulative uses to which the proletariat could be put. In order for their positions in the assemblies to win out over manipulation, revolutionary workers must not be paralyzed by democratic formalism. For their part, the leftist rivals of the Stalinists—by opposing the Stalinists’ despicable behavior—were able to obtain some ephemeral successes. But the leftists were successful only so long as they contented themselves with

denouncing the Stalinists; when the leftists attempted to profit from these successes, their influence receded. The leftists' tail-ending opportunism was an attempt to create the impression that they were moving from one victory to another. But to be a contemporary Lenin, it isn't enough to shout "All power to the assemblies!" nor to simply acknowledge that reality has changed. One must be acknowledged by the reality that one would try to control and direct. The final misadventures of decomposed Leninism were well illustrated by the comical confusion reigning in the only leftist group (Los Plataformas Anti-Capitalistas) that remained afloat in the backwash of the movement in Vitoria. This group was compelled to support the dissolution of the Representative Committees (which had become compromised by the Stalinists) so as to preserve their "pro-assembly" image. And yet, this same leftist group was also compelled to remain loyal to the base of its mythical mass organization [the Organizacion de clase anticapitalista], which—of all the Representative Committees in the Congress of Representatives—was the most adamant about *not* relinquishing power to the general assemblies! When generalized violence, which broke out in the aftermath of the repression of 3 March 1976, had closed out the margins for maneuvering and recuperation, these so-called anti-capitalists modestly attached themselves to Christian pacifism and to the democratic version of the events that took place in Vitoria. "There wasn't any confrontation in Vitoria between police and demonstrators. What actually happened was a brutal attack against the respect owed to a holy place and against the human person" ("Manifesto of the Representative Committee," read by Naves, 6 March 1976).

Comrades:

The revolution is not a matter of diverting the enemy, but of destroying it. The proletariat does not require justifications, because it does not have to convince anyone of anything. The proletariat seeks its own satisfaction and is not motivated by the desire to satisfy others. If the proletariat cannot assume its historical reason for being, it cannot hope to win. To repeat: the necessary and sufficient definition of a *modern council* is the realization of its minimum task, which is nothing more nor less

than the practical and definitive liquidation of *all* the problems that class society is incapable of resolving. Anything else is the prattle of impotence or *the diversions of manipulators*. No juridical formalism can guarantee to workers organized in modern councils the right to exercise total democracy. Only greatness will make the workers great; only wretchedness will make them wretched. The practice of the assembly makes everything possible but assures nothing. The only theory (the only “theory of the ex-workers’ councils”) that is necessary to develop is *the theory of the councils’ war* against everything that doesn’t belong to them and everything inside the proletariat that prevents it from being the unique power, starting from what it has inherited from the past and what consequently limits the councils’ appropriation. In this war, everything is simple but even the simplest thing becomes difficult. No one has the experience of fighting this war and its practical problems; the time necessary to acquire such experience may be prohibitively long. The proletariat arms itself by disarming the enemy and reappropriating any backlashes against it. If it were a simple matter of a single spontaneous *coup d’etat* and if the enemy found itself—even before it had begun to fight—in circumstances that rendered the task of fighting the revolution a hopeless one, then it would be very easy indeed to make history and to have the revolution be a kind of idyll. But the limit of the spontaneous offensive of the workers is always their organized defense against the enemy that obliges them at first to organize with the enemy’s means and capacities. The real way to wage the social war—i.e, the free adaptation of it to specific needs by every means available—has for too long been passed over as a subject that doesn’t fit into the theory of the council, and that only depends on spontaneous improvisation. For most of the time, these problems come up as something “extra,” and as anonymous memories or accounts, because the protagonists deceive themselves by mistaking reality for an ideal of some kind. We know that such illusions—ideas purporting to resolve the problem of revolutionary re-appropriation and in the form of a militarized organization external to the proletariat that would execute a putsch—have reigned among the anarchists to a large degree, especially in anarchism’s unionist forms. The techniques

of social war include techniques obligatory in all wars, but the social war is never reducible to conventional war, despite the fact that revolution presupposes a certain degree of militarization. As one militia member said during the civil war, “We shall not win like this.” In conclusion, Spain must remember that it is the classic country of the guerrilla and that it will have to invent superior forms of guerrilla activity in accord with the nature of modern revolution.

Comrades:

What we have recently experienced has only been the mild beginnings of something that will happen again in the future and that will continue for some time. For the new revolutionary movement spontaneously springing up from the soil of modernized Spanish society, it is today a question of organizing and coherently unifying the basis of the project of subverting class society. The critique that makes no concessions to the still-not-overcome deficiencies of the proletariat must accept its responsibility for the isolation of the workers. Linking its fortunes to radical proletarian acts and to their future, this critique must begin with the ideological illusions it has about itself, about its struggles, about those who speak in its name, and about its predominantly defensive tactics. This critique must not make any concessions to the current attempts of capitalism to adapt, especially in the widespread deception that is sure to follow the elections. At a time when all traffickers in dead ideas “come out of hiding” and rush to take their respective places in the political and cultural spectacle, this critique shall find its means of existence in the new clandestinity of real life, in which new practices and gestures of refusal—denied access to official expression—are traced out. In this way, the ground is being prepared upon which all those already feeling the need for truth, and already searching for the means to impose it, will encounter each other far beyond any transitory illusions. In the front ranks, the language of critical autonomy will be found; without this language, the revolution cannot comprehend itself nor name its enemies without ideological mediation. It is essential to be done with the anti-intellectual and workerist traditions that have weighed down the Spanish revolutionary movement for so long.

The rejection of theoretical activity, which has been justified by the more or less concealed ideology of the absence of ideas and which today returns in the form of a non-specific unionism that serves workerist intellectuals and intellectual workerists, is in these circumstances a criminal act. What is to be done is the achievement of full consciousness of what has to be done so that the arm of critique develops in tandem with the critique of arms.

Even more dangerous to the revolution are the union bureaucrats and the parties that have *tolerated* workers' democracy in return for being tolerated by the workers who nevertheless do not support the bureaucrats' unionism. The bureaucrats know that they must crush all autonomous forms, or be annihilated. The counter-attack—the calumnies, threats, accusations and isolated counter-revolutionary violence—against isolated revolutionaries has already started. Henceforth, it will no be longer a question of the bureaucrats ignoring radical workers during periods of repression, but of handing these workers over to the police and of reducing them to silence by whatever means are available. Self-defense against all police officers and the forces of law and order—whatever shade they may color themselves with—is the order of the day. As the verdict of the barricades of May 1937 put it, “Up to now the revolution has not done anything more than transform Stalinism and its allies. Today it is a question of destroying them.”

Comrades:

The weapons that serve as the defense of the workers (in so far as they are *wage laborers*) will be the last weapons in the defense of wage labor. By separating itself from everything that is at one with the old world, and by passing from the defense to the offense with *its specific method of war*, the proletariat must manage its own autonomy. The fight for victory needs the weapons of victory.

What There is to Know about the Uncontrollables

After 40 years of triumphant counter-revolution, the same fears find the same words. During the Spanish Civil War, the government coalition that destroyed the revolution to lose the war—that is to say, the bourgeoisie, republicans, socialists, Stalinists and CNTists—used to call all those proletarians who, fighting all their internal and external enemies right up until the end, would not obey anyone other than themselves uncontrollables. And today, when revolution has returned as the order of the day, the same accusatory name is hurled against those excessive ones who inconveniently jeopardize the peaceful reorganization of their exploitation by all the supporters of the old world.

Those who insult the proletariat in this manner show—by the simple fact that they still have the opportunity and means to do so—how much moderation there remains amongst the proletariat. The proletariat certainly has no reason to defend itself against such an accusation, and must recognize it as both the truth of the enemy and the truth of the proletariat. That is to say, *uncontrollability* is the truth of the social war in which the explosion of proletarian negativity is itself uncontrollable and capable of coming to a real conclusion only with the destruction of all external control and the abolition of “everything that exists independently of individuals,” i.e., the establishment of communism.

As for us, who are additional uncontrollables, we do not appear at the head of this movement, saying to the masses, “Here is the truth; now get on your knees,” as do all the authoritarian ideologists on the look-out for some reality to manipulate. We only show what the struggle *is* and why it must acquire a thorough-going consciousness of revolutionary struggle.

By doing this, we do not belittle ourselves, nor do we conceal our project, which is nothing more than that of all the other uncontrollables, who must possess this project consciously in order to possess it in reality. The organization of “the community of proletarian revolutionaries that places all the conditions of its

existence under its own control” will never take place under the aegis of any kind of “workers’ control” in which the workers control the production of their own misery, which is precisely what the most up-to-date of the State’s servants dream of doing. The organization of the community of revolutionaries is undertaken so as to bring about the insurrectionary realization of communism, and the abolition of commodities, wage labor and the State.

20 April 1977.

AUTONOMOUS GROUPS SEIZE THE WORD

After several imprisonments of members of Autonomous Groups in France and Spain some good “revolutionary” souls judged us before the state did it for itself. We despise theorists without a useful method who criticize our practice, but avoid having one of their own, who are incapable of carrying anything forward, of committing themselves, etc.

All those who treat us as crazy, irresponsible “activists”, in order to better justify their passivity.

“crazy”, “activist”, “irresponsible”

If we are “crazy”, our madness is not mild; it is the madness of wanting to live, of refusing to submit ourselves to wage labor, of shattering the circle of banality, of utilizing every possibility for finding ourselves, of opening and uniting ourselves in order to better affirm the autonomy of our desires unsatisfied by capital.

If we are “activists”, our activism is the pleasure of subversive play, the pleasure of freeing our I, of overcoming institutionalized fear, of removing the limits to our possibilities.

If we are “irresponsible”, our irresponsibility disturbs the established order and anyone who wants to take its place. A bomb, a well-place “molotov” cocktail, a disruption of the means of information at the opportune moment, achieves more practical and positive effects than any pamphlet or radical discussion.

We know the objections made to our actions: they are spectacular, terrorist, recuperable, they hide the workers’ struggle, allowing the state to violate its own laws, reinforce its power and heighten repression.

The spectacle does not interest us!

We do NOT want to appear as an organization of specialists with its hierarchy, its spokespeople and its initials. We know that the state cannot polarize the attention of proletarians on any left-right opposition; it has need of an organization described as “terrorist” in order to play this “role” itself. This state does not need us as a pretext for exercising its daily terrorism: police terrorism against demonstrations and strikers, the terrorism of

the bosses' police (or "private police"), the terrorism of generalized exploitation...

Workers and anti-workers

Our actions don't try to force proletarians to defend themselves by combating their alienation outside of the political and union camp (wildcat strikes, independent general assemblies, etc.). Proletarians don't need revolutionaries; when the latter intervene, they should do so, first of all, on the terrain that they have chosen. Because they are in this terrain, comrades who work in a temporary or tactical way, in order to account for a wage waiting to obtain unemployment benefits, should, in fact, intervene in these struggles. Others, like ourselves, who categorically refuse to submit to wage labor, only bring them tactical support. There is no link of submission of one to the other since the cult of the worker is just as unfortunate as that of the anti-worker who completely avoids all impositions.

Our actions are not the only real and total opposition to Power. They are, in fact, limited, precise and subjective (responses to the murders of comrades in prison, in the streets and in the workplace). Sometimes they are coordinated around some point of precise and concrete intervention (nuclear industry, prisoners' movement, against wage labor...).

We may claim them or not as we see fit. Sometimes, not claiming some of them (attacks, expropriations, etc.) allows some organization or grouplet to appropriate them for themselves in order to give the illusion of a potency they don't have and to get recognized as having more efficacy in their competition with the state. A merely publicity-oriented strategy of pseudo-abundance, which allows their imprisoned militants and martyrs to claim any action, gives the impression that they are the best defenders of the working class. They are the consequence of vanguardist speculation, the claim of believing themselves to be the carriers of revolutionary conscious. We do not at all want to accept the confusion between ourselves and these organizations; in the same way, and as internationalists, we don't accept the confusion between ourselves and the organizational carriers of nationalist (IRA, ETA) or third-worldist (RAF) ideology.

We don't acknowledge admirers, or professionals of "solidarity", who systematically approve of all our actions, limiting themselves to affirming their radicality in demonstrations, assemblies and meetings, without daring to take risks in struggles and their consequences.

Comfortable positions that allow them to compensate for their alienation with a militant activism, without having to act, take initiative and give evidence of determination...

These are all those who (due to the inability to find an active outlet for their verbal radicalism, to perceive anything new in our praxis, to make their critique of leftism and reformism concrete and useable, let alone to escape their alienation) want to make autonomy the new fashionable ideology.

We prefer to have nothing to do with them and not to let them speak in our name.

Anti-hierarchical and egalitarian practice

This position is not elitist. Anyone could do what we do, and if anyone, pushed by social impositions, decides to start their struggle, then we will communicate our experience with them, explain our successes and errors to them, not deny them any of our means.

Their practice must be anti-hierarchical and egalitarian. This rule currently limits our number, sometimes leads to splits, but prevents the delegation of power, allows a certain coherence for our revolutionary project and makes infiltration more difficult, guaranteeing us a dynamism that some numerically larger organizations might envy.

The proletariat subjected to wage labor, where the problem of armed struggle is now immediately posed, cannot delegate this task to specialist groups (ourselves included); the current situation in Spain requires it. It is necessary to reverse what proletarians did with SEAT (formerly ERAT): instead of dividing the money, produced through expropriations, for aiding the unemployed, they should have created the conditions necessary so that other proletarians could have carried out expropriations in turn and in an increasingly extended manner, thus favoring the creation of nuclei of armed struggle within the factories. Due to their isolation, they were not able to extend

their process of struggle. Despite this, they showed that they possess a vast revolutionary consciousness, thus indicating the real approaches that the proletariat should take.

We autonomous groups, as armed portions of the radicalized proletariat, having refused wage labor, can only provide early assistance for the creation of armed groups in the workplaces and outside of them; afterwards, those directly interested should be showing their capacity to affirm their own autonomy.

It is the only way not to create armed crutches for the defense of proletarians. The strategy of the FAI during the Spanish revolution is no longer valid; nowadays, proletarians must take the realization of their desires in hand, while the situation requires it, armed or not, but always for themselves.

Our current tasks are to respond to repression and indicate places for concrete intervention. On our own we are capable of engaging in battle with the state; these tasks must be taken up by the entire proletariat.

Abolition of wage labor!
For a classless society!

Communique of autonomous groups, January 1979, Spain

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